

AN ATLAS OF MUSCLE PATHOLOGY IN NEUROMUSCULAR DISEASES. By J. Godwin Greenfield, M.D., G. Milton Shy, M.D., Ellsworth C. Alvord, jun., M.D., and Leonard Berg, M.D. (Pp. ix + 104; figs. 87. 45s.) Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone, 1957.

THIS is an important and useful attempt to clarify one of the most unsatisfactory and difficult aspects of morphological pathology. Of great value to the pathologist, it will also inform neurologists and physicians of the place and limitations of biopsy diagnosis.

As the authors point out, much difficulty is caused by the use of terms, such as necrosis, degeneration, and inflammation, which, when applied to muscle, have no clear or generally accepted meaning. The first ten chapters are therefore devoted to a purely objective description of the histopathological changes seen with ordinary techniques in muscle. These are illustrated by photo-micrographs in both colour and monochrome, which, with very few exceptions, do really advance the descriptions.

In the second part the authors attempt to describe with what clinical entities the reactions are associated. Avoiding such terms as myopathy, myositis, and muscular dystrophy, which have variable definitions, they recognize distal muscular syndromes of definite and possible neurogenic basis, myotonic syndromes, including dystrophia myotonica, myotonia congenita, and para-myotonia congenita, proximal muscle syndromes which include many cases now designated myositis and muscular dystrophy, and finally myasthenia gravis. They are forced to conclude that no single change has been found specific for any disease, and even combinations of changes are no more than highly suggestive.

It is evident that nothing useful will result from muscle biopsies unless both physicians and pathologists appreciate the limitations and the need for correlation of clinical and histological observations. In all such studies this book will be a useful guide. J. E. M.

THE LIVER: SOME PHYSIOLOGICAL AND CLINICAL ASPECTS. Volume 13, No. 2, of British Medical Bulletin. (Pp. 75-152; illustrated. 20s.) London: The British Council, 1957.

THIS will probably prove to be one of the most popular numbers of this bulletin. It supports the contention of Sir Harold Himsworth in the introduction that neither study of the normal nor study of the abnormal can alone supply the full information required for the comprehension of either.

The survey is admittedly limited to some aspects only, but develops logically from papers on biochemistry, the circulation in the liver, and response to injury by both toxic agents and nutritional deficiency to clinical papers on infective hepatitis, hæmochromatosis, hepatolenticular degeneration, and aspects of liver failure. Several large volumes have recently been published on this subject, but within a reasonable compass this number succeeds in presenting the more actively advancing aspects of the subject in a manner acceptable to non-specialist readers.

CUNNINGHAM'S MANUAL OF PRACTICAL ANATOMY. Volume I. Revised by J. C. Brash, M.C., M.A., M.D., D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.C.S.(Ed.), F.R.S.E. Twelfth Edition. (Pp. xii + 394; figs. 196. 25s.) London: Oxford University Press, 1957.

THE appearance of the first volume of a new edition of this well-known and popular manual after nine years is an event to be welcomed. The general arrangement of the subject matter into three volumes dealing respectively with the limbs, trunk and head, and neck will be as previously, but the order of dissection is altered to meet the demands for greater flexibility in this matter. Thus, the body is no longer to be placed in the lithotomy position for the first dissections, as the perineum will be dealt with after dissection of the abdomen. This process of modernisation might well have been extended. For example, the great importance of the hand and foot could be stressed at a time when the material is relatively fresh, and a more comprehensive picture of the limbs as appendages of the body would be obtained,